

VINDICATOR

The journal of classic science fiction & fantasy boardgames from yesterday — and today

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Editor and Publisher:
Duke Ritenhouse

Editor emeritus:
Michael Friend

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correspondence should be sent to:

Duke Ritenhouse
P.O. Box 4806

Palm Springs, CA 92263-4806
e-mail: DukeRit@aol.com

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NEW LOOK — SAME BAD ATTITUDE / Duke Ritenhouse

It's new. It's (hopefully) improved. It's fashionably late, as usual — it's the new-look VINDICATOR. Actually, the fashionably late part and the new-look part kind of go together. As even a casual glance inside will show, the revived VINDICATOR's look is almost completely different from the first two issues produced.

Here's a greatly reduced version of what happened: I was about halfway through putting this issue together in the old digest-sized format when I said "to hell with it," ripped it all up, and started over. I'm glad I did it, but it sure didn't help get this issue out the door any sooner.

Ironically, I actually liked the digest-sized look. I think it fits in nicely with the "retro" theme of this newsletter (and, really, a forum for games that are in the neighborhood of 20 years old is about as retro as one can get). But I like the digest look even more if someone else is producing it — for my one-man operation, it just became too much hassle to deal with. Specifically, these were the drawbacks:

- **Far too many jumps.** A digest-sized page just doesn't hold that much copy. As a result, I was forced to jump even short pieces at least once. Longer pieces, obviously, jumped and jumped and jumped ...

- **Barely enough room for graphic elements.** This goes along with the item above. Even the simplest chart seems to take up a ton of space on a digest page. I've got much more breathing room now.

- **Two columns of type was about the only way to go.**

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CHECK OUT VINDIE ON THE WEB:

WWW.MILLCOM.COM/~FORHAN/VINDICATOR.HTML

ADDING G.E.V.'s TO BATTLESUIT / Ron Shirtz

Battlesuit was a tactical combat microgame published by Steve Jackson Games in 1983; it was designed on a smaller scale than the Ogre/G.E.V. series. It quickly became an orphan, as no other modules were produced to expand the game.

This article seeks to add G.E.V.'s to Battlesuit for those die-hard microgamers lucky enough to still own this little gem. By adding G.E.V.'s to Battlesuit, an Ogre-like situation is recreated on a smaller scale, with a powerful unit (the G.E.V.) up against a large number of lesser units (Battlesuit infantry).

Scale

First, some notes on movement and time scale for the two games:

Ogre/G.E.V. scale is four minutes per turn and 1,500 meters per hex. Battlesuit turns are 10 seconds long; scale is 37.5 meters between adjacent points. Obviously, despite having the same theme, these are two games on a vastly different scale.

However, it's possible to boil all the numbers down to reach the most important figure: how fast can a G.E.V. travel on the Battlesuit map?

A G.E.V. can travel 10,500 meters in a four-minute turn in the Ogre/G.E.V. world, or 43.75 meters per second. That's 437.5 meters for every 10-second turn in Battlesuit, or 11.67 points. For gaming purposes, that figure is easily rounded to 12.

Firepower

The average Battlesuit squad of six standard battlesuits has approximately 48 firepower factors. Since a G.E.V. can attack a single infantry squad in Ogre/G.E.V. at 2:1 odds, the G.E.V. should have the following firepower: 40 main gun, 25 for each side battery, and 12 for the top gun turret. All G.E.V. attacks over 10 are treated as 10 on the Battlesuit CRT; while at first this seems to negate the effects of the G.E.V.'s firepower, it should be noted that the G.E.V.'s greater firepower will absorb most ECM, hard and soft cover, range, elevation, and reaction attack modifiers.

G.E.V. counter/status sheet

Battlesuit G.E.V.'s are 1 level (2 meters) tall and hover 1 level above their current level. The G.E.V. counter has only the ECM and Movement values listed. All attack factors are listed on a status sheet.

Firing arcs are as illustrated. The numbers 1 through 6 are used for resolving the direction a G.E.V. will crash should it fail a crash roll.

Four G.E.V. Combine and Paneuropean counters have been provided. Glue and cut counters from stiff cardstock and fill in the white G.E.V.

G.E.V. Damage Table

2. Pilot KIA: If G.E.V. is moving, roll d6 for possible crash. Otherwise speed is reduced by half, and all turn costs are doubled. All fire attacks are halved.

3. Co-Pilot/Gunner KIA: All fire attacks are halved.

4-5: One thruster destroyed. Speed reduced by half. Side determined by LOS.

6-7: Blower fan damaged: Speed reduced by half, turning doubled. If G.E.V. is moving, roll d6 for possible crash.

8: Main battery destroyed.

9-10: One secondary battery destroyed. Side determined by LOS.

11: Antipersonnel turret destroyed.

12: Structural hit: If half or more of G.E.V.'s structure is damage, roll d6 every time G.E.V. makes a turn. A roll of 1-3 results in structural failure. G.E.V. immediately crashes in d6 movement points.

counters with a red marker to distinguish them as Combine units.

Movement

Hovercraft, having neither the aerodynamic design of aircraft nor the traction of tracked/wheeled vehicles, skid and slide in high speed turns. Prior to moving a G.E.V., a speed counter is placed on it to determine the number of points the G.E.V. will skid when making turns. A G.E.V. may turn 60 degrees at any point on the map. When making a turn, consult the G.E.V. turn table to determine the number of points in the direction the G.E.V. will skid. **Example:** A G.E.V. heading due north at a speed of 10 makes a 60-degree right turn at point R 10.5. Before moving in that direction it will skid 2 points sideways and cross points Q 10 and P 9.5. Since the last point is soft cover, the G.E.V. will suffer a Crash dr with a -1 modifier for soft cover.

G.E.V.'s cannot jump or hover over hard or soft cover. They may cross contour lines normally. G.E.V.'s must be at a speed of three or less to enter, not skid, into soft cover (such as trees) or suffer a Crash dr.

G.E.V.'s may go in reverse. They must spend at least half of their designated movement points to stop if they have moved in the previous turn or moved in the present turn. Any remaining unused movement points may then be spent to move the G.E.V. in reverse. All turning points are doubled while in reverse.

G.E.V.'s are allowed to move off the map and later return under the following conditions: First, they must forfeit at least two turns prior to return-

ing to any map side; second, the player controlling the G.E.V. must announce, one turn prior to the event, which map side (but not point) the G.E.V. will re-enter. G.E.V.'s are immune to attacks and are prohibited from attacking while off the map. Battlesuit infantry cannot use this option.

Attacks

G.E.V.'s may fire any and all weapons during their firing phase, per Battlesuit rules and firing arcs of weapons. G.E.V.'s may only elevate their main and secondary batteries at targets four levels higher than their present level.

G.E.V. ECM

G.E.V.'s have an ECM of 4. Arguably, they should easily be able to carry more sophisticated spoofing devices than infantry, but their unstealthy design and size handicaps them in this regard. Their heavier armor compensates for this — only X results on the Battlesuit CRT affect them.

G.E.V.'s receive all cover benefits from hard and soft cover. G.E.V.'s may target as per Battlesuit rules.

G.E.V. damage

Ignore all 1s, 2s, etc. on the Battlesuit CRT against G.E.V.'s. An X results in a 2d6 damage roll. Damage is applied to the G.E.V. as in Ogre — i.e., damage is checked off to various weapons and vehicle systems on the G.E.V. status sheet. The major exception to checking off damage to the G.E.V. is when the damage dr calls for a system to be destroyed that is NOT in the attacking unit's LOS. **Example:** The damage roll calls for the G.E.V.'s left secondary battery to be destroyed. If an attacking unit's LOS is traced from the right side of the G.E.V. at the same level, that LOS to the left secondary battery is blocked. Treat the result as a structure hit instead. There is no LOS blocks to G.E.V. systems and weapons if the G.E.V. is being attacked by a unit one level or higher.

G.E.V.'s suffer the same effects as other units when in the same hex of an exploding Bomb Drone.

Damage Table notes: If a previously destroyed location is hit again, treat as a structure hit. G.E.V.'s have 6 structure points. All damage is cumulative. If a G.E.V. loses both thrusters, or all fan points, it cannot move. On a crash roll, a 1-3 results in the G.E.V. crashing within d6 movement points, regardless if the G.E.V. has fewer movement points left to move than the roll result. Roll d6 for direction the G.E.V. will move to crash.

The term "crew" refers to the G.E.V. pilot and

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copilot/gunner.

G.E.V. Crash Table

1: G.E.V. explodes. All G.E.V. crew are KIA, all units in point suffer an attack with a strength of 10.

2: G.E.V. destroyed. All G.E.V. crew are KIA. Any units in map point are unaffected.

3: G.E.V. destroyed. Roll d6 for each crew member to see if they survive (1-3 KIA, 4-6 unharmed).

4: G.E.V. suffers 3 damage rolls. Crew unhurt.

5: G.E.V. suffers 2 damage rolls. Crew unhurt.

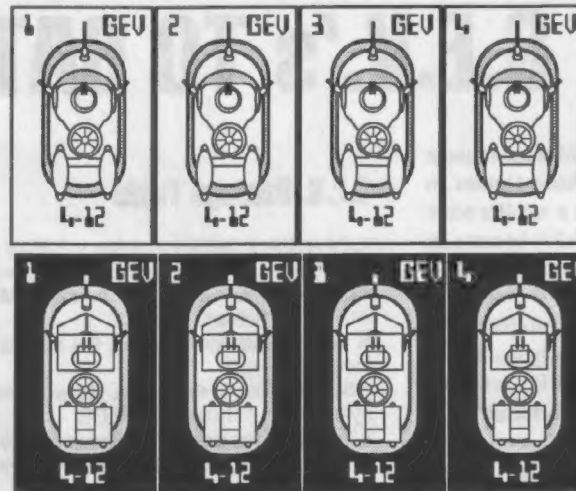
6: G.E.V. suffers 1 damage roll. Crew unhurt. Apply a -1 modifier if G.E.V. crashes on a point containing hard cover.

Crash Table notes: Any still-functional G.E.V. weapons may fire from the crashed G.E.V. if there is at least one surviving crew member. If the G.E.V. has at least one functioning fan and thruster, and one living pilot or copilot, it may move the next turn. If it has a fan, and one living pilot or copilot, it may turn up to 60° in that map point per turn to direct fire attacks. There is no halving of fire attacks for a crashed G.E.V. if one of the crew is KIA.

The crew (pilot and copilot/gunner) may abandon the crashed G.E.V. the following turn. They are represented by 3-0-2 infantry units. If a G.E.V. on the ground loses all its structure points, the crew (if living) is automatically placed outside that unit.

Morale and G.E.V.'s: Battlesuit morale rules are not used for G.E.V.'s. Instead, roll d6 for a G.E.V. morale check every time a thruster, pilot, or copilot/gunner is destroyed or KIA as a result of a damage roll. A 4 or higher must be made or the G.E.V. retreats off the map.

Scenarios



COMBINE

Use red marker
to color white background

PANEUROPEAN

counter artwork by Ron Shirtz / permission granted to photocopy

CP Raid: A lone Paneuropean G.E.V. has slipped undetected into the Combine's rear area. An understrength reserve platoon is hastily called up to protect the CP.

The Combine player gets 9 Standard, two Assault and one Command suit, plus three heavy weapons. Combine player has three Bunkers to set up on the map, one of which is the real CP. Paneuropean player's G.E.V. enters on the North side of the map.

Victory conditions:

CP saved and Paneuropean G.E.V. destroyed: Major Combine victory.

CP saved: Combine victory.

CP and G.E.V. destroyed: Marginal Paneuropean victory.

G.E.V. Down: A Paneuropean G.E.V. has crashed behind enemy lines. The copilot/gunner is actually a high-ranking officer viewing the front. The immobile G.E.V.'s weapon, structure and major systems are intact, except for thrusters and fans. To determine the G.E.V.'s position on the map, first place G.E.V. on point L15. Roll d6 to determine

direction and then roll 2d6 to determine distance from starting point. If the down G.E.V. can hold out for ten turns, it will be rescued by friendly G.E.V.'s.

The Combine player get eight Standard suits, two Rangers, two heavy weapons, and one Recon Drone. If the Combine player can capture the officer and get him off board before the tenth turn, he will have a Major victory.

To capture the passenger, at least one power infantryman (not drone!) must be in the same point as the 3-0-2 counter representing the officer (designated as such by the Paneuropean player). If that Combine infantry suit survives any and all attacks following the turn he enters that point, the officer is considered disarmed (weapon crushed by a powered armored glove) and captured by that infantryman. Any attacks to the capturing unit affect the prisoner as well.

Victory conditions:

Officer captured, regardless of casualties: Major Combine victory.

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MEET PHANG!

Phang is VINDICATOR's official mascot — but, really, he's so much more than just a handsome face.

Phang will be appearing throughout the pages of this and upcoming Vindie's. But here's the catch: **his unique-looking mug will only appear next to an important announcement or other official Word From On High.** In other words, he's the publisher's official spokes-dragon. So subscribers and/or contributors should be on the lookout whenever Phang lands on a given page.

Phang's hobbies include collecting old ARES magazines, writing nasty letters to Wizards of the Coast, college basketball (his favorite team is Drexel University — see if you can figure it out), attending comic book conventions, and chasing knights, paladins, cavaliers and other lawful-good types around the countryside.

What's that, boy? Uh oh.

Phang says that's enough of the witty editorial give-and-take — time to get back to the newsletter!

Standard GEV

Main Battery(40)	0
Right Secondary Battery(25):	0
Left Secondary Battery (25):	0
Anti-Personnel Turret (12)	0
Pilot:	0
Co-Pilot/Gunner:	0
Fan:	0 0
Structural Damage:	000 000
Right Thruster:	0
Left Thruster:	0

GEV TURN MODE

Speed	Standard
1-3	0
4-8	1
9-12	2

Firing Arcs & Crash direction dr #'s

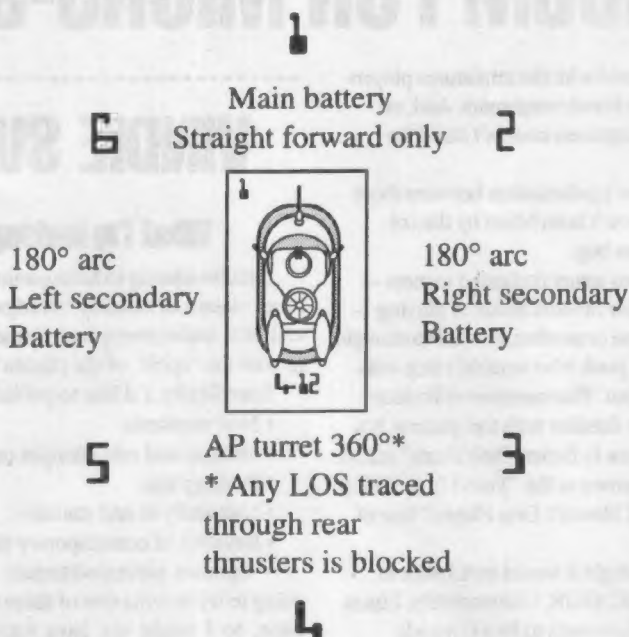


Illustration provided to photocopy.

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G.E.V./crew destroyed with 30-percent or fewer Combine casualties: Combine victory.

G.E.V./crew destroyed with 50-percent or fewer Combine casualties: Marginal Combine victory.

G.E.V./crew destroyed with 60-percent or greater Combine casualties: Draw.

G.E.V. rescued, but officer KIA: Marginal Paneuropean victory.

G.E.V. rescued with officer alive: Major

Paneuropean victory.

Rhubarb in the Valley:

Each player starts out with two G.E.V.'s and 12 Standard suits, three heavy weapons and one Command suit.

Each player then places four Assault suits, four Ranger suits, one heavy weapon, and all drones of their nationality in a cup. Four random draws are made by each player from their cup and are added to their forces. Six wreck counters are placed on the map by the Combine player. The Paneuropean player rolls for a direction result to move those wrecks after they are placed by the

Combine player.

Combine player will enter South of the map, Paneuropean from the North.

Victory Conditions:

Survivor has 30-percent casualties or fewer: Major victory.

Survivor has 31-50 percent casualties: Victory.

Survivor has 51-65 percent casualties: Marginal victory

Survivor has 65-percent or higher: Tainted victory — cannot hold the ground against future counterattacks and must abandon the field.

THE CLASSICS REVISTED: A REVIEW OF ICE WAR / Duke Ritenhouse

Yes, you read that correctly. This is a review of Ice War, a game published by Metagaming — No. 9 in the legendary Microgame line — over 20 years ago.

Why review a game that's over 20 years old?

Three reasons, mainly:

• It's interesting to take a look at games from the "classic" era to see how well they hold up years later — would the rules set be able to fly in today's gaming world? is the game's influence still being felt in any of today's products? does the game still pack enough "feel" to transport a gamer back 15 or 20 years (if only for an hour or so)?

• Between gaming conventions and the Internet, games from the classic era aren't nearly as rare as some might have you believe. These games are out there, if you want to look hard enough and/or pay hard enough. For the classic-era gamer who is thinking of re-purchasing one of his old favorites — or who can't quite remember if such-and-such game was any good or if it was One World-like — a review might come in handy when making a purchasing

decision.

• There's some high-quality games sitting on shelves all across the country. A review such as this one just might be enough to get one of those games unpacked and onto the kitchen table, where it belongs.

With all of the above in mind, here's a look at Ice War — 20 years later.

Note: All review categories are based on a 1- to 5-**V** rating scale (the **V**'s stand for "Vindie," of course).

Vital stats

Full title: Ice War

Publisher: Metagaming (1978)

Designer: Keith Gross

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NO ROOM FOR MICRO-SNOBBERY / DUKE RITENHOUSE

It probably started with the miniatures players sneering at the board wargamers. And, of course, the wargamers couldn't stand the D&D crowd.

Currently, there's polarization between those who have and haven't been bitten by the collectible card games bug.

And, really, how many dedicated gamers — no matter what their favorite mode of playing — haven't, at one time or another, wanted to strangle some 13-year-old punk who wouldn't stop talking about his bitchin' **Warhammer** collection?

All gamers are familiar with this pattern. It's from the "My Game Is Better Than Yours" school of thought, also known as the "Turn My Nose Up At Those Games I Haven't Ever Played" line of thinking.

But I never thought it would be a factor in publishing VINDICATOR. Unfortunately, I must report that there does seem to be a Give Me Metagaming Products Or Give Me Death! crowd out there.

I've received a number of negative comments — most, I will admit, were friendly in tone and none were nasty — about certain articles that have run in the first two issues of the revived VINDICATOR. What did those articles have in common? They were not about Metagaming products — a point made clear by those expressing their displeasure.

Before the rebuttal, a clarification is in order. First, look at the deck headline on the cover. It reads "The journal of classic science fiction & fantasy boardgames from yesterday — and today." Now, that might or might not be the best deck ever written, but I did spend a lot of time thinking about it, since I wanted it to serve a very specific purpose. I needed that deck to be both firm (in other words, this is not a forum for **Axis & Allies** or **Monopoly**) and flexible (**The Fantasy Trip**, while not technically a boardgame, is still most welcome on these pages) at the same time.

Now, note the following heavy-handed use of italics: *nowhere does it say that VINDICATOR is a Metagaming-only publication.*

Next, read the "what I'm looking for" section of the submission guidelines, which have appeared in all three issues published to date. I quote: "Articles relating to Metagaming's Microgames, other classic SF/fantasy boardgames of the '70s and '80s, and contemporary games that seem to fit in with the 'spirit' of the classic boardgames era."

Again, I took a certain amount of time and effort to try and get that thought just right. So, to be absolutely frank about the whole thing, I don't

VINDIE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

What I'm looking for

Articles relating to Metagaming's Microgames, other classic SF/fantasy boardgames of the '70s and '80s, and contemporary games that seem to fit in with the "spirit" of the classic boardgames era.

Specifically, I'd like to publish:

- New scenarios.
- Variants and rule changes or extensions.
- Strategy tips.
- Unit analysis and statistics.
- Reviews of contemporary games or interest.
- Opinion pieces/editorials (although I am going to try to write one of these myself for every issue, so I might not have room for too many more).

• Letters to the editor.

The above suggestions are by no means exclusive — I'll publish anything that appears interesting enough.

What I'm not looking for

• Poetry.

• Artwork. At least for the first few issues that I produce, I am going to keep my costs down by not hiring a professional printer or typesetter. What you're reading now was produced entirely on my home computer — the minute I start accepting art, I'm looking at halftoning and other printing headaches. So, for now at least, no art.

Exception: Very, very simple charts or countersheets or the like that would look acceptable through either photocopying or by having me redraw them are acceptable.

• Fiction. Unless it's very short and you're very good. Minimum requirement: you've appeared in a publication I've heard of.

• Articles on games such as **Battletech**,

find myself in much of a mood to be questioned about running, for example, an article on **Freedom in the Galaxy**. No, **Freedom in the Galaxy** is not a microgame (in fact, it's the opposite — it's a monster) or in any way a Metagaming product. But it was a classic. It had both fans and detractors. It had its faults. But it had a *huge* impact on SF gaming — and that makes it a classic.

But the fact that no one is reading the submission guidelines (or at least reading them carefully) is not really the point. What's more important is the attitude I've encountered: My Game Is Bet-

Warhammer, most role-playing games — with the exception of **The Fantasy Trip** — and **Squad Leader**. All of these types of games already have larger, more elaborate magazines devoted to them.

• It should go without saying that I won't publish anything of a slanderous, libelous, racist or sexist nature.

How to send submissions

VINDICATOR is entirely produced on my home Macintosh. Therefore, articles submitted on a Mac-formatted floppy disk or Zip disk are desirable (I won't return floppies, but I will return Zips). For those of the PC ilk, I can convert articles submitted on a PC-compatible disk. **Please save your work in ASCII format, however.**

If you're sending a disk, please be sure to include hard copy as well.

Better still by far is to simply e-mail an article to me. I've contributed to various newsletters and online magazines over the years, and sending information via e-mail has yet to fail. Again, hard copy should also be forwarded via snail-mail.

All of my address information is on the cover.

Payment

Right now, none — except getting your name in print.

Upon publication, an article's author will have his VINDICATOR subscription extended by one issue (possibly two issues for an extremely long and/or professional effort).

Copyright

I make no claim to the rights of any articles submitted.

Authors will retain their copyrights in perpetuity, as far as I'm concerned.

ter Than Your Game. Which, in this case, translates to: Microgames Are Better Than Other Boardgames.

Bottom line: It's just miniatures-vs. wargames-vs. **D&D**-vs.-CCG-vs.-**Warhammer** all over again.

I honestly thought that the devoted fans of an era whose heyday is at least 15 years in the past would be above such sentiment. After all, what ammunition can any of us bring to a gaming debate when it's *our* games that aren't being played anymore?

Back Issues and other notes

• I've received a number of requests lately along the lines of "can you begin my subscription with issue No. 1?"

In a word: no.

Unfortunately, that's not how it works when you, me, or anyone else subscribes to a magazine. And, while this humble home-brewed enterprise will never be confused with Newsweek or Esquire, it does share some of the same ways of doing business.

For instance, my "press run" consists of *exactly* the number of issues I need to get mailed out, according to my mailing list. Once those are mailed out, that issue *immediately* becomes a back issue—since I don't have any additional issues just sitting around, I have to charge higher than the normal subscription rate to make up for the cost and time of printing out a single extra copy.



Also, beginning a subscription with the next issue to be published cuts down on a lot of paperwork. When your check arrives, you go on the mailing list — nothing could be simpler. Allowing special requests not only complicates the matter, it serves to rip off the kind folks who I've already charged for back issues.

• **Speaking of back issues**, former publisher Michael Friend has provided a list of what he's charging for Vol. 1 issues of Vindie: Nos. 1 and 2 are \$1 each; No. 3 is \$1.15; No. 4 is \$2.70; Nos. 5a and 5b are \$1 each; No. 5c is \$2; and Nos. 6a, 6b and 6c are \$1 each. Make checks payable to Michael, and send your requests to: P.O. Box 384, Manlius, NY, 13104.

• **To eliminate confusion**, I've decided to make my back-issue price the same as my sample-

issue price. Both are now \$2.50.

• Please remember to keep hands and feet inside the car when approaching Phang.

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Contents: 24-page rulebook, 135 counters, map

The conflict

Those damn Commie ESA-ers (Eurasian Socialist Alliance) have launched a land-based raid of Alaskan oil fields, using the polar ice cap as their A-to-B method. A handful of U.S. troops stand in the way of the Red Menace ... and reinforcements are on the way.

Physical quality

Rulebook: The blue-and-white painting of a dead ESA soldier buried in a snowdrift certainly evokes a feeling of cold and despair. Five interior illustrations (plus one on the back cover) add up to more effort than Metagaming put into a lot of its products. The typeface is clean. **VVVV**

Counters: Blech. Take your pick: the brown guys or the white guys. The vehicle silhouettes are kind of neat, though. **VV**

Map: Only a handful of hexes don't represent the polar ice cap, so there's not much of a chance for colorful terrain. It's boring — but at least it's well-done. **VVV**

Quality of rules

Clarity (are the rules presented well?): Like all Keith Gross designs (*Invasion of the Air-Eaters*, *Hitler's War*), *Ice War* is virtually unplayable after an initial reading of the rules. Gross just didn't design anything approaching a standard Igo-Hugo boardgame. However, a second reading of the rules — along with cutting out some counters and experimenting a little bit — clears a lot of things up. Like all Gross designs, once the game is learned, some surprising subtleness comes into play. **VVVV**

Complexity (too much, too little, just right?): Again, *Ice War* seems overwhelming at

first glance — especially on a Microgame scale. But, again, the game is surprisingly playable with just a little effort. Believe it or not, rules for terrain conversion, different types of missiles, hidden units, off-board satellites and reinforcements are all covered without the rules feeling cramped or rushed. These are essentially the perfect Microgame rules — fairly simple to grasp, yet challenging enough to not become boring. **VVVV**

Effectiveness (do the rules help simulate what is supposed to be simulated?): The brown counters don't exactly evoke an Arctic feeling, but the game does a good job of presenting what it would be like to launch a complete surprise attack across a gigantic sheet of ice. **VVVV**

Quality of play

Mechanics: Fairly straightforward, once they are grasped. Each player has a missile, movement and combat phase. The U.S. player also has to worry about satellite searches and reinforcements. A fairly fluid design. **VVVV**

Fun: *Ice War* can be tremendous fun if played by two evenly-matched opponents. The ESA player must try to stay hidden for as long as possible, then strike at the Alaskan coastline before too many U.S. reinforcements arrive. The U.S. player, obviously, wants to spot the aggressors as quickly as possible. Most games have two stages: cat-and-mouse, followed by fire at will. **VVVV**

Overall

Easily one of Metagaming's top efforts. Compared to a dog such as *Dimension Demons*, a game such as *Ice War* would receive nothing but perfect scores. But the initial steep learning curve and the bland physical quality keep this game from scoring the coveted five Vindie's.

VVVV

Join in the fun

I'll accept — in fact, I'm actively seeking — reviews of any classic-era SF or fantasy boardgames. There's only three rules that have to be followed:

- The game must have a publication date of 1984 or earlier.
- The review **MUST** follow the format given in the accompanying *Ice War* article. It's probably a character flaw on my part, but it drives me insane when a publication can't follow the same review format from one issue to the next. Consistency in reviews is a high priority in my life.

So, while the opinions will be your own, any game reviewed must contain a **brief introduction**, the **relevant vital stats**, a short discussion of the **conflict involved**, and ratings for each of the following categories: **physical quality** (rules, counters, map), **quality of rules** (clarity, complexity, effectiveness), and **quality of play** (mechanics, fun). Finally, an **overall rating** should end the review. All ratings should be from one to five Vindie's (no halves or other fractions).

- The article cannot be more than 650 words long. For purposes of comparison, the *Ice War* review is 788 words long, but that includes the lengthy introductory notes I put at the beginning.

So the review is in your court, so to speak. Scour those shelves for the old classics that deserve to be looked at again.

—DR

STALIN'S TANKS — PLUS ONE / BRIAN TRAIN

Stalin's Tanks (ST hereafter), Microhistory No. 3, was published in 1980. It was designed by Roger Damon, who had earlier published Rommel's Panzers (Microhistory No. 1). In ST, the broad subject is the same—tactical armoured warfare—but the locale has been shifted to the Eastern Front and the system is, in my opinion, much improved from the earlier game.

As far as I have been able to tell, no variants for ST have been published, save for some designer's notes and errata in INTERPLAY Nos. 2 and 3. This article contains a number of suggestions and additions to the game, along with some new units and scenarios in which to use them. I think these variants add a lot of depth and variety to the game (not that there wasn't lots there before) without making it as complicated and time-consuming as *Advanced Squad Leader*.

Suggestions for existing rules

1. Anti-tank guns should have a Movement Factor of 0. Even the smallest guns were far too heavy to move at the same pace as dismounted infantry does in the game. Optionally, allow anti-tank guns of 60mm size or less to be pushed one hex (only) in the First Movement Phase (only).

2. Some German halftracks carried light machine guns. At your option, give them an AP factor of 2 and let them always hit the target, as infantry units do, with no ability to attack armored units.

3. Most streams in the steppes of Russia flow through small gullies (balkas), hence their existing effect on movement—but the steep sides should give some cover to infantry and guns. Double their Defense Factor when these units are in these hexes.

4. Where are the tank riders? Let Soviet Inf. units start the scenario stacked with tank or SP gun units. They may not fire while loaded on the tank (they are too busy hanging on for dear life, and they're loaded on vodka anyway). If the vehicle they are riding on is destroyed, they are destroyed, too. Infantry and Machine Gun units may attack the riders separately from the vehicle—they have a Defense Factor of 2 in this case.

Tank riders may only dismount, never remount,

during the game. This is done at a cost of three Movement Factors (MF) to the carrying vehicle, in the Second Movement Phase. The infantry do not move further in that Phase.

New units and rules

26.0 Aircraft

26.1 Air Superiority. Before the game begins, the players determine air superiority as follows:

Year	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945
DRM	+3	+1	0	-1	-3

Each side rolls one die, with the German player applying the Die Roll Modifier (DRM) shown above. The high roller has air superiority, and the number of sorties available to him during the scenario is *half* the amount by which he won the roll (round fractions down). A tie results in no sorties for either side.

26.2 Aircraft Movement and Attacks. Only one aircraft sortie can be on the map at any one time. One sortie is made up of up to three "passes" by one aircraft counter over the map, one pass per turn on up to three consecutive turns. During one pass, the aircraft counter will enter on any map-edge in the First Movement Phase, and fly in a straight line along the hex row it entered on until it stops to attack a unit or units in a hex or hexes located in that row with its weapons systems in the Mobile Fire Phase. Any anti-aircraft (AA) fire is resolved in the Defensive Fire Phase, since this fire may affect the attack or drive the aircraft away completely (see the AA Fire rules).

Aircraft automatically "see" and may attack any vehicles or infantry in clear hexes on the map. However, to attack enemy infantry in woods, swamp or building hexes, they must be spotted by friendly ground units with a clear line of sight to the hex, a maximum of four hexes away. The aircraft conducts its attacks in the Mobile Fire Phase. It then finishes flying off the map, in the same straight line, in the Second Movement Phase.

26.3 Aircraft Weapon Systems. The player with air superiority may choose the same or different models of aircraft for each sortie he flies. Each aircraft carries machine guns, plus any one weapons system chosen from the other three avail-

able.

26.31 Machine Guns. Any aircraft can carry these. They have an AT value of 4 against open-topped vehicles only (i.e., the SU-76, Nashorn, Marder III, trucks, and halftracks), an AP value of 6, and may be used on any pass, in addition to any other weapon system the aircraft carries. The aircraft can fire its machine guns at any one hex ahead of it in the hex row along which it is flying in the Mobile Fire Phase, applying only the +3 DRM for a moving firer and any other DRM from effective AA fire received in the Defensive Fire Phase.

26.32 Auto-Cannon. Only the German player may choose this weapon system, and only in scenarios occurring in or after mid-1942. (Optionally, allow the Soviet player to choose this system in 1945 scenarios, as they did field a very few such planes.) Aircraft carry a pair of 37mm cannon, with an AT value of 10 and an AP value of 6. Cannon may be used on any pass. The aircraft can fire its cannons at any one hex ahead of it in the hex row along which it is flying in the Mobile Fire Phase, applying only the +3 DRM for a moving firer and any other DRM from effective AA fire received in the Defensive Fire Phase. The Armor Class of the target vehicle is lowered by two levels (three if it is open-topped), regardless of its actual aspect (since part of the attack is on the top armor).

26.33 Bombs. Any aircraft can carry these. They may be dropped only once in a sortie. The aircraft can drop its bombs on its own or any adjacent hex in the Mobile Fire Phase. There is no roll to hit, but bombs may scatter as artillery does, and the chance of this is increased by effective AA fire in the Defensive Fire Phase. The effect of aircraft bombs on unarmored units is equal to a light artillery barrage. Bombs will also automatically disrupt (see 14.3) any armored units in the zone of effect of the bombs, and will destroy them on a roll of 4 or less.

26.34 Rockets. Only the Russian player may choose this weapons system, and only in scenarios occurring in 1943 or later. Rockets may be fired only once in a sortie. The aircraft can fire its rockets at any one hex ahead of it in the hex row along which it is flying in the Mobile Fire Phase, apply-

► to page 8



PHANG SEZ:

Remember, use one space after a period if you plan on submitting an article. Two spaces are for English papers; one space is for serious contributors who want to look professional—and be treated as such.

► from page 7

ing only the +3 DRM for a moving firer and any other DRM from effective AA fire received in the Defensive Fire Phase. Rockets have the same effect against unarmored units as a light artillery barrage, but they do not scatter. Rockets can also be fired at an armored unit. The aircraft rolls to hit as above, and if successful attacks with an AT Factor of 25. The Armor Class of the target vehicle is lowered by two levels (three if it is open-topped), regardless of its actual aspect (since part of the attack is on the top armor).

26.4 Anti-Aircraft (AA) Fire. This takes place in the Defensive Fire Phase. Only the following units may conduct this fire: Machine Gun Sections; 20mm, 20mm Quad, and 37mm AA; and 88mm Flak (not Pak).

All units automatically have a LOS to the aircraft, with no DRM except Weapons Accuracy for any units that have it. Each unit rolls to hit the aircraft as if it were an armored target (the 20mm Quad can roll to hit twice). Each hit means that the aircraft suffers a +1 DRM in the Mobile Fire Phase (so 2 hits equals +2 DRM, etc.) if it is trying to attack with MG, cannon, or rockets, or a -1 DRM for scatter if it is dropping bombs. A total of two cumulative hits will drive the aircraft away and end the sortie after its current attack, and three cumulative hits will destroy it before it can resolve the attack.

27.0 New Units

27.1 New Guns. These new guns are introduced for different situations and early-war scenarios. The AA guns would probably not be met outside of a rear-area, static defense situation.

20 and 20Q: German 20mm and 20mm quadruple-mount AA guns.

37: Russian 37mm AA gun.

45: Russian 45mm anti-tank gun. Used throughout the war, but more common in the early years.

50: 50mm anti-tank gun the Germans used until 1942/3.

27.2 New Vehicles.

Armored cars: besides being modestly armed and armored, these units may travel up to twice their movement factor on roads. They all have turrets. All models provided here were used throughout the war as reconnaissance and command vehicles. The Soviet BA-32 has a 37mm gun. The German 234/1 and 234/2 cars have a 20mm and 50mm gun, respectively.

Marder III (Mdr III): this German tank destroyer was a marriage of a light tank chassis with a captured Russian 76.2mm gun. Over 2,800 various models were built during the war, beginning in the spring of 1942. Treat as an open-topped SP gun.

Trucks (TRK). The counters supplied are generic ones that can be used by either side. Trucks can transport infantry, MG sections, and anti-tank guns, as in 17.0. Trucks travel twice their MF on

20mm 6 ④-6-0	20 Qd 20 ⑩-6-0	50mm 10 16-6-0	MG 6 4-6-2	MG 6 4-6-2	234/1 5 8-1-8	234/2 10 14-1-7	Mdr III 18 ②-H-6	Trk 0 0-K-8
37mm 8 ⑥-6-0	45mm 10 14-6-0	45mm 10 14-6-0	MG 6 4-6-2	MG 6 4-6-2	BA-32 8 10-1-8	BA-32 8 10-1-8	Trk 0 0-K-8	Trk 0 0-K-8

ET 4 0-5-4	ET 4 0-5-4	ET 4 0-5-4	ET 4 0-5-4	ET 4 0-5-4	ET 4 0-5-4	Cav 4 0-5-4	Cav 4 0-5-4	Cav 4 0-5-4	LIGHT BARRAGE
ET 4 0-5-4	ET 4 0-5-4	ET 4 0-5-4	ET 4 0-5-4	ET 4 0-5-4	ET 4 0-5-4	Cav 4 0-5-4	Cav 4 0-5-4	Cav 4 0-5-4	HEAVY BARRAGE

counter artwork by Brian Train / permission granted to photocopy

roads. However, it costs them two MF to enter a clear hex and four MF to enter a hill, and they may not enter woods, swamp, stream (except at the bridge) or building hexes.

27.3 Machine Gun (MG) Sections. This unit represents a section of two heavy machine guns — normally there would not be more than one of these per infantry company (i.e., per 9 Inf. counters), unless defending a fortified area. These units are a class of infantry unit, except that they may not close assault. They may also fire at one hex with an AP factor of 6, or two adjacent hexes with an AP factor of 3 in each hex. Their AP factor is doubled at five hexes or less.

27.4 Cavalry (Cav). These units are like ordinary Soviet infantry units, except that they are faster (they pay the same terrain costs as infantry) and may not make ranged attacks on armored units. They may make close assaults.

27.5 Entrenchments (ET). These counters may be placed only at the beginning of a scenario, in any hex that is not a building. Any Inf. unit, MG Section, or anti-tank gun occupying a hex with an ET counter doubles its Defense Factor if it is a clear hex, or triples it if the hex is woods or hill. The unit also gets a +1 DRM benefit when rolling to survive artillery barrages or bomb/rocket attacks.

28.0 New Scenarios

28.1 Airfield Raid (1944). Part of a Russian cavalry-mechanized group has broken through the front and is heading for a small airfield, defended by a scratch force of mechanics and gunners.

Forces:

German: 1(20), 1(20Q), 1(88Flak), 6(Inf), 2(MG), 6(Mined hexes).

Soviet: 2(BA32), 2(T34b), 6(T34c), 6(Inf), 3(Cav).

Set-up: The German player sets up within five hexes of 1617 (the airfield main hangar), but the mines can be placed anywhere. Use the Air Units rules and give the Germans Air Superiority and two sorties automatically, to reflect that the planes based at the airfield have been able to scramble.

Game Length: Six turns.

First Move: The Soviet player moves first, entering all his units on turn 1 anywhere on the east map edge.

Victory: The Soviet player gets 1 point for each tank he exits off the west map edge, 1 point for each gun he destroys, and 5 points for occupying 1617 with an infantry unit at any time during the game. The German player gets 1 point for each tank he destroys, and a half-point for each armored car or infantry unit.

28.2 Route Patrol (1942). A German vehicle patrol on the route between two occupied villages "bumps" some light Russian forces trying to infiltrate the front.

Forces:

German: 1(234/1), 1(234/2), 2(PzIIa), 1(PzIIg), 3(HT), 3(Inf).

Soviet: 2(BA32), 2(BT7), 3(Inf) or 6(Cav).

Set-up/First Move: The German player moves first. On Turn 1, the two armored cars enter at 0309 in the First Movement Phase and follow the road south for at least eight hexes. In the Second Movement Phase, either the three tanks or the halftracks (with infantry aboard) enter at 0309 and move south along the road. The last group of units will enter at 0309 on the First Movement Phase of Turn 2. The Soviet player may either take 3 infantry and set them up using Hidden Initial Placement in any non-clear hexes anywhere on the board (represents a group of partisans waiting in ambush: treat them as ordinary infantry except that they may not make ranged attacks on armored vehicles) or enter 6 cavalry with his vehicles. In either case, the Soviet vehicles enter anywhere on the east edge on Turn 1.

Game Length: Six turns.

Victory: Each side scores 1 point for each armored car or halftrack destroyed, 2 points for each tank destroyed, and 1 point for each unit exited off the south (for the German) or west (for the

► from page 7

Soviet) map edge.

28.3 Hedgehog Defense (1942). A Russian combat group descends on a company-minus strength position defending a river ford.

Forces:

German: 1(50), 1(75), 2(MG), 6(Inf), 10(ET), 6(Mined hexes).

Soviet: 4(T-34b), 2(T-34a), 2(KV-1a), 8(Inf).

Set-up: The German sets up all his forces within five hexes of 1617. The Soviet player will enter from one of the four sides of the board (roll on the scatter diagram to see which one).

First Move: The Soviet player moves first.

German reinforcements: The German player rolls two dice before each of his First Movement Phases for random reinforcements:

2-3 — 1(Stug-B) or 1(Marder III), German player's choice.

4 — one light artillery barrage, to be used that turn.

5-9 — none.

10 — one heavy artillery barrage, to be used that turn.

11-12 — 3(Inf), 3(HT), 1(88 Flak), 1(Truck).

The unit or units (if any) enter at 0309 (or 3124, if the Soviet player entered from the north map edge).

Artillery: Use the Air Unit rules and roll for Air Superiority. The German player also gets random artillery support, as above.

New Units Characteristics (bold AT Factor = Weapon Accuracy)

	Armament	AT	Arm	Move	AP	No.
GERMAN						
Armored Car 234/1	20mm	8	I	8	5	1
Armored Car 234/2 (Puma)	50mm	14	I	7	10	1
Marder III tank destroyer	76mm	22	H	6	18	1
20mm Flak gun	20mm	4	6	0	6	1
20mm quad Flak gun	4 x 20mm	10	6	0	20	1
50mm anti-tank gun	50mm	16	6	0	10	1
HMG Section	2 x hvy MG	4	6	2	6	2

RUSSIAN						
BA-32 armored car	37mm	10	I	8	8	2
45mm anti-tank gun	45mm	14	6	0	10	2
Cavalry	small arms	0	5	4	4	6
HMG Section	2 x hvy MG	4	6	2	6	2
37mm AA gun	37mm	6	6	0	8	1

GENERIC						
Truck	none	0	K	8	0	3
Entrenchment	none	-	-	-	-	12
Airplane (1 for each side)	varies	-	-	-	-	2
Barrage markers	light, heavy	-	-	-	-	2

Game Length: Eight turns.

Victory: The Soviet player wins by either eliminating all the German player's original units

(i.e., the ones he had at set-up) or by having a unit in 1719 on the last turn of the game. The German player wins if the Soviet player fails to win.

HEROQUEST TREASURE CARDS / Ronald Pehr

• First, add a regular deck of playing cards to the standard HeroQuest treasure/wandering monster deck.

• Use the information on the accompanying chart if a playing card is drawn.

• When a Hero searches a room or pit for treasure, and the Quest does not specify a given treasure in that location, the player draws one card.

• All spades are wandering monsters.

• One joker represents a Magic Staff.

• The other joker represents a Dagger of returning.

• All hearts are one-use magic items. See chart for specifics.

• For all other cards, see the chart at right.

Ace	HEARTS Water of healing (restores four body points)	CLUBS Flashpowder (ignites when stepped upon, lose one body point) Flashpowder	DIAMONDS Sapphire (20 gold)
2	Dust of Sleep (powder acts as Sleep spell)	Falling beam (lose one body point)	15 gold
3	Oil of Slipperiness (may move freely through spaces with monsters on next turn)	Falling beam (lose one body point)	10 gold
4	Magic Rock (2d missile weapon)	Punji stake (lose one body point)	5 gold
5	Potion of ESP (reveals living beings in any room)	Punji stake	Diamond (50 gold)
6	Wand of Opening (disarms any trap)	Scorpion sting (lose one body point)	Diamond (50 gold)
7	Potion of Speed (roll double dice for next move)	Scorpion sting	Ruby (45 gold)
8	Javelin of Thunder (3d missile weapon)	40 gold	Ruby (45 gold)
9	Blessed Cloth (heals four body points)	40 gold	Two emeralds (20 gold each)
10	Potion of Courage (two extra attacks while monster is in sight)	25 gold	Two emeralds (20 gold each)
J	Astral Vapors (may move through rock on next turn)	25 gold	25 gold
Q	Oil of Defense (two extra defense until damaged)	Sapphire (20 gold)	30 gold
K	Brew of Intellect (double mind points, one test)		Brooch (75 gold)

FIELD ANNOUNCED FOR VINDIE INVITATIONAL!

You, the VINDICATOR reader, hold the fate of the entire free world in your hands.

That's actually a slight exaggeration. You do, however, hold the fate of the 16 classic micro-sized games listed below in your hands — or, more accurately, your e-mail programs.

Your votes will determine which games win which of the head-to-head matchups listed below. The "rules," such as they are, are simple:

1. Vote for the game you liked best. For any rea-

son (it's fun, you like the map, the girl working the counter the day you bought it was kind of cute, whatever).

For this round, you should vote once for each of the eight first-round matchups.

Don't vote for both games. And don't feel obligated to cast a vote if, for instance, you never played either *Olympica* or *Raid on Iran*. Just vote for those matchups in which you definitely have an opinion as to which is the superior game.

2. One vote per person. I'll be monitoring those return addresses, so no stuffing the ballot box.

And if you're e-mail is broken — or you don't have it in the first place — send your votes the old-fashioned way. It's your 32 cents.

3. Winning games move on to the quarterfinals — to be announced next issue — while losing games limp off the field, hanging their metaphorical heads in shame.

ROUND OF 16

QUARTERFINALS

SEMIFINALS

CHAMPIONSHIP

Meloo/Wizard (Metagaming)

vs. Star Viking (Dwarfstar)

Olympica (Metagaming)

vs. Raid on Iran (S. Jackson Games)

Castrol (Metagaming)

vs. Robots (Task Force)

Ice War (Metagaming)

vs. Creat. That Ate Sheboygan (SPI)

Ogre/G.E.V. (Metagaming/SJG)

vs. Sticks & Stones (Metagaming)

Revolt on Antares (TSR)

vs. Starfire (Task Force)

Invasion of the Air-Eaters (Meta.)

vs. Intruder (Task Force)

WarpWar (Metagaming)

vs. GravArmor (Dwarfstar)

**e-mail address:
DukeRit@aol.com**

THERE'S GOLD IN THEM THAR GAMES!

One of the unique things about Metagaming's line of small games is that most have at least retained their value today. In some cases, certain Metagaming items have even entered the fabled and magical realm of "Collector's Item." That can't be said for a lot of the useless garbage that was released following the jump-on-the-Ogre-bandwagon period.

I was reminded of this recently when Ken Ellis of Yadkin Valley Games in North Carolina forwarded to me the results of an Internet auction he conducted. The items he had on the block were all Metagaming products, ranging from a 1978 edition of **Wizard** (pretty rare, especially one in good shape) to a copy of **Stalin's Tanks** (not so rare).

This prompted me to look up the results of two Metagaming-only auctions I ran in the near past. The first was fairly large in scope and was centered around the boardgame line; the second (which just ended a couple of weeks ago) was smaller and centered around the **Fantasy Trip** line.

The final results of the three above-mentioned auctions are at right. Numbers represent the dollar-amount the winning bidder paid. "DR-1" and "DR-2" refer to my first and second auctions, respectively. "YVG" refers to the Yadkin Valley auction.

This information is presented here as a service to VINDICATOR readers who are thinking of either A) selling some Metagaming items, B) buying same, or C) wondering what their collection might be worth. This information should not be confused with anything of a scientific nature, however. Take it for what's it's worth: a small survey of some recent auctions.

Also, the following should be kept in mind:

- According to his list, Ken's stuff was generally in great shape. The condition of my items varied widely.

- Condition is of great importance to some buyers and unimportant to others. Generally speaking, whether or not the counters have been punched seems to affect price more than any other factor.

- Timing can be critical. I got a \$40 combined offer on the two-game **Helltank** series from a buyer who basically wanted the games yesterday. If I put those games up for auction another 100 times, I would not see a \$40 check in at least 99 of those cases.

- Editions do matter. Ken got \$14 for what I'm sure was a beautiful (and hard-to-find) copy of **Wizard** printed on slick paper. I got two bucks for the revised third edition rules.

— Duke Ritenhouse

Item	DR-1	YVG	DR-2
Microgames			
Chitin:I	14		
Melee			2
WarpWar	8		
Wizard		14	2
Olympica	4		
G.E.V.	4		
Ice War	7		
Black Hole	6		
Sticks & Stones	11		
Invasion of the Air-Eaters	8	7	
Holy War	5		
Ann. / One World		6	
Hot Spot	4	6	
Artifact	7	8	
Dimension Demons	4	6	
Lords of Underearth	8	12	
Helltank	20		
Trailblazer	4		
Helltank Destroyer	20	7	
Starleader	9		
Microhistories			
Rommel's Panzers	10		
Ram Speed	9	11	
Stalin's Tanks	9	9	
Fury of the Norsemen	4		
Fire When Ready	9		
Boxed games			
Air-Eaters Strike Back	8	14	
Dragons of Underearth	10		
Trojan War	15		
Melee / Wizard / The Fantasy Trip			
Death Test 2			7
Grail Quest			5
Treasure of Silver Dragon			6
Security Station	5		
Treasure of Unicorn Gold			6
Master of the Amulets	8		
Orbquest	7		
TFT: In the Labyrinth			10
TFT: Advanced Melee			21
TFT: Advanced Wizard			9
TFT: Tollenkar's Lair			8

► from page 1

Three columns — which I used occasionally — was about as narrow as the type could possibly be, while one column was about at the limits of how wide type should be set. With a full-page look, I can set type in many different widths, all of which are readable without much difficulty.

- **It was hard to keep track of everything.**

Picture this: your humble publisher actually had to make semi-elaborate flow charts to keep track of which story was going where and how many times it was jumping, etc. It was a mess. And God forbid if something had to change in the late stages of putting an issue together.

- **It was difficult to assemble.** Twenty-four pages of digest-sized copy had to be folded in half and carefully stapled with an industrial-sized Stapler from Hell. I don't even plan on using staples with the new look (where would I put them, for one thing?)

Okay, that catches everyone up on the graphic design. Now, how do you read the damn thing?

It's really not as bad as it might seem. Basically, once you're through with the cover, lay the whole thing flat and open it up. The first page you see will be 2. Flip page 2 and you have page 3, and so on. You might even want to consider three-hole-punching the whole thing, which will keep everything together nicely (this is what I did with all of the full-sized Volume I issues when I was a subscriber — it worked wonderfully and gave me a library of gaming material inside one binder). Attach paper clips and/or staples at your own discretion. For those who wonder about such things, the total printable area of the two designs is roughly the same. In other words, you're getting the same amount of Vindie for your money.

Along with a new look, I think we've got some interesting stuff in this issue, with some of the features hopefully becoming at least semi-permanent. I'm excited about the concept of reviewing some of the old classics, and I'm hop-

Next Issue

Hey, I've learned my lesson at this point — I'm not claiming *anything* is going to be in the next issue. I'd just be wrong anyway. Whatever gets in there will be by accident. I might print every other page upside-down, just to be difficult.

Okay, I'll promise four things:

- Results from the first round of the Vindie Invitational.

- Another classic game revisited — even if I have to do the review myself.

- An article of some sort on **One World**.

As many of you have probably picked up on by now, I love to pick on **One World**. But I have a confession: I actually like the game. In fact, I think it's a *good* game — much better than many of Metagaming's releases. And every reviewer who ever slammed it missed the point entirely. I would bet money (yours maybe, not mine) that most of those reviewers never actually played the damn thing.

- The best *non-variant* article I receive between now and Oct. 20 or thereabouts.

Here's a sad truth: I've got many articles in hand right now, and they all have one thing in common. They're variants or expansions of existing rulesets. I don't want to publish only variants. There's a lot more out there — scenarios, strategy tips, unit analysis, historical perspective, reviews, etc. Variants can be wonderful things, but not in the quantity in which I've been receiving them.

ing that everyone participates in the microgame tournament (and recognizes it for what it is, instead of taking it too seriously). There's solid variants for **Battlesuit** and **Stalin's Tanks** inside these pages. There's even (eek!) my first true rant-and-rave editorial ...

Anyway, enough from me. Turn inside and take a look as VINDICATOR crosses a new frontier. I hope you like what you see.